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# **Factors Affecting Adolescents' Choice of Branded vs. Fashionable Clothing**

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## **Abstract**

The aim of this project is to analyse the importance of branded and fashionable clothing, and which of them is the most important for adolescents when choosing their clothes, according with gender and age. The research analysed how three factors (peers' influence, materialistic behaviour and self-esteem) affected adolescents' clothing choices in the Portuguese market.

148 adolescents (12 and 16 years old) participated in the research, by answering a questionnaire.

Results show that teenagers do not draw a separation between brands and fashion, and that their clothing preferences reflect their peers' advices and level of materialism.

**Keywords:** adolescence, branded clothing, fashionable clothing.

## **1. Introduction**

Adolescents are seen as “hyper-consumers” (Chaplin & John, 2005b) in most of the markets. They are defining their identity and their preferences regarding many products (John, 1999), such as clothing.

During adolescence, clothing is used due to their symbolical value and its power to establishing relationships with peers, who are the most important source of information when children reach the adolescence (Chaplin & John, 2005b).

Furthermore, clothing is used to compensate the low levels of self-esteem during the adolescence period. Children of this age exhibit high levels of materialism, such as the desire of apparel's possession. Both levels of materialism and self-esteem have opposite tendencies (Chaplin & John, 2007; Rosenberg, 1979). Therefore, one of the objectives of this research is to analyse the extremes of the adolescence (12 and 16 years old, equivalent to 7<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades) when materialism and self-esteem have opposite levels.

Moreover, the choice of clothing is influenced by their preferences of fashion and brands. And these choices are dependent on the referred peers, materialism and self-esteem, and also differ by gender. Few studies evaluated these concepts separately, and without comparing the relevance of each of them. In this study, it will be clarified if nowadays adolescents are choosing their clothes based on fashion or on brands, and how their choices are affected by peers, self-esteem and materialism, according with age and gender.

## **2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Formulation**

### **2.1. Adolescence**

Adolescence is a transitional stage where significant physical and cognitive developments and social maturation occur (Feldman, 2008; Piacentini & Mailer, 2004; John, 1999). It is also defined as the formal operational stage of the human development, at which people start to express their capacity to think abstractly (Piaget & Inhelder, 1958), create arguments and criticize others' opinions (Elkind, 1996). At this stage, adolescents acquire psychological abilities that will help them in their life as consumers (John, 1999).

This period is equally known as puberty in which many adolescents feel uncomfortable with the changes in their bodies. The adaptation to a body in constant change has a strong impact in the adolescents' self-esteem (Feldman, 2008).

#### **2.1.1. Gender Role**

Both genders react differently during this stage. Normally, before taking a decision when shopping, female teens tend to search for information to make correct choices, in order to respect the orientations from their peers (Solomon & Rabolt, 2004; Thomson, 2000; Churchill & Moschis, 1979; Hamilton & Warden, 1966; Solomon, 1963).

Inversely, male teens show a more independent life from their peers (Churchill & Moschis, 1979). They usually are more influenced by brands than female teens (Harper et al., 2003). Regarding the fashion concept, both genders perceive it differently because they have dissimilar prospects about stylish (Rocha et al., 2005).

### **2.2. Peers Influence**

During the adolescence, peers are the most important source of information, presenting a dominant influence role (Yang & Lachose, 2010; Feldman, 2008; Dotson & Hyatt,

2005; Youniss & Haynie, 1992) instead of parents (Chaplin & John, 2010). They demonstrate standards of conduct, establishing a set of norms and values (Berndt, 1999), being considered, in this way, the most important element of social evaluation (Feldman, 2008; Paxton et al., 1999; Schutz, Paxton, & Wertheim, 2002; Rankin, Lane, & Gibbons, 2004).

Peers influence fashion and clothing brands' choices (Park & Lessig, 1977), determining the ones that are acceptable by them (Smucker & Creekmore, 1972). This means that peers define expectations related to a clothing style and about the brands that should be used by the group members (Chaplin & John, 2007; Cohen, 1982; Solomon, 1983; Kelly & Eicher, 1970). For this reason, adolescents tend to share ideas with their peers before doing a purchase with the intention to preserve group identity (Mascarenhas & Higby, 1993; Bearden & Randall, 1990). On the other hand, teenagers value the opportunity to express, through clothing, their own individuality (Piacentini & Mailer, 2004), and they do not want to look exactly the same as their peers (Ross & Harrandine, 2004). To clarify the importance of peers influence, it is considered that this source of influence is more relevant than the desire to express their own identity through clothing:

***H1: Adolescents tend to choose clothing mainly according with what their peers will accept and not so much with what they would like to dress.***

Nonetheless, when adolescents do not correspond to peers' expectations, they are not accepted by the group. This rejection has a negative effect in the adolescents' self-esteem (Rigby, 2000; Sharp, 1995).

### **2.3. Self-Esteem**

Solomon and Rabolt (2004: 143) defined self-esteem as “feelings of self-worth; the positivity or negativity of self. Often with social comparison we evaluate ourselves; we evaluate the self as we would any object.” This concept is closely related with others’ acceptance. When a person has a low self-esteem, he/she feels that they will not perform correctly in a social context, and that they will be rejected by their peers. In the opposite situation, someone who has a high self-esteem tends to expect success in his/her life and show riskier behaviours (Baumeister et al., 1989).

Moreover, it is noteworthy to refer that people who demonstrate a low self-esteem are more susceptible to be influenced by other individuals (Janis, 1954) and to have a higher level of materialism (Chaplin & John, 2007).

### **2.4. Materialism**

Materialism is the desire to acquire material possessions (Solomon & Rabolt, 2004) by their symbolic meaning (Chaplin & John, 2007) and as a contribution for individual identity (Richins, 1994). Materialistic people see specific products as a way to achieve a certain prestige (Belk, 1988) and appearance (Solomon & Rabolt, 2004), happiness and success (Richins & Dawson, 1992). They normally purchase expensive products recognized by their community (Richins, 1994).

During the period of adolescence, material possessions are seen as a compensation for insecurity and low self-esteem (Braun & Wicklund, 1989; Chang & Arkin, 2002; Kasser, 2002; Solberg et al., 2004). Parents (Chaplin & John, 2010) and television exposure (Churchill & Moschis, 1979) influence teenagers’ materialism. Peers have the most important role for a materialistic behaviour through promotion of certain purposes (Chaplin & John, 2007). Regarding differences by gender, Churchill and Moschis

(1979) verified that male adolescents demonstrate a more intensive materialistic behaviour and social motivations for this specific consumption attitude.

## **2.5. Clothing**

Clothing is used to communicate the individual identity to the society (Stone, 1962), and it is considered one of the most important sources of information when meeting new people (Piacentini & Mailer, 2004). Apparel is seen as an element of a status symbol and/or a path to achieve a certain one. Jensen and Ostergaard (1998) proved that people with a low level of self-esteem usually give more importance to clothing.

During the period of adolescence, clothing is seen as a way of self-expression and to judge other people (Piacentini & Mailer, 2004). For this reason, teenagers search for information with their peers about fashion and the brands (Chowdhary, 1988).

Many studies about clothing have been done. Some of them focus on extrinsic factors such as brands, other ones on intrinsic factors, like fashion. Nonetheless, some contradictory results were found. For instance, a study carried by Taylor and Cosenza (2002) argued that fashion/style is the most important quality when doing clothing purchases, seeing brands as the less important attribute; on the opposite side, Solomon and Rabolt (2004) defended that brand is the most important factor in apparel. These differences depend of the materialistic behaviour of individuals and their self-esteem. Therefore, it is intended to analyse the following hypotheses in the adolescence period:

***H2a: Adolescents with high materialism prefer branded clothing.***

***H2b: Adolescents with low materialism prefer fashionable clothing.***

As mentioned before, female teens give a huge value to their physical appearance (Unger, 2001; Ricciardelli & McCabe, 2003). To achieve certain objectives related with



look, they use clothes that change their body shape (Solomon & Rabolt, 2004). Therefore, female teens are more interested in fashionable than in branded clothes.

***H2c:** Female teens prefer fashionable clothing than branded clothing.*

Previously, it was discussed that male teens tend to be more materialistic (Churchill and Moschis, 1979) and to prefer to acquire expensive products (Richins & Dawson, 1992). They are typically more influenced by brands (Harper et al., 2003). The author believes that there is a positive relationship between materialistic behaviour and the preference for branded to fashionable clothing.

***H2d:** Male teens prefer branded clothing than fashionable clothing.*

It was discussed earlier that people with high levels of self-esteem tend to have riskier behaviours (Baumeister et al., 1989), which is also applicable to clothing.

***H3a:** Adolescents with high self-esteem prefer fashionable clothing.*

***H3b:** Adolescents with low self-esteem prefer branded clothing.*

### **2.5.1. Branded Clothing**

Brands are considered an important tool to identify the social and economic status of individuals (Piacentini & Mailer, 2004). The unique factor that reinforces consumers' loyalty is if brands are satisfying their needs (Grant & Stephen, 2005; Solomon & Rabolt, 2004).

For adolescents, brands can have a dual function: they can be a factor of peer acceptance and an element of their own individuality (Piacentini & Mailer, 2004).

Peers influence the use of specific brands to reinforce connections between their elements (Cardoso et al., 2008; Chaplin & John, 2005a). They are willing to pay a premium price to acquire a certain brand that is a symbol of the group (Grant & Stephen, 2005). Authors believed that the dependence from peers restricts adolescents

to use brands recognized as important by peers, not giving to them enough freedom to express their own individuality through fashion. Conversely, brands are only important if the peers group determines them as vital (Bearden & Ertel, 1982). Then, to clarify this scenario the following hypotheses will be:

***H4a:*** *Adolescents with high peer influence prefer branded clothing.*

***H4b:*** *Adolescents with low peer influence prefer fashionable clothing.*

It was proved that brand significance increases with age due to children starting to find the ones that “fit” better with their personality (Chaplin & John, 2005a). Achenreiner and John (2003) discovered a contradiction when brands are related with peer acceptance. In their study older children argued that brands do not assure social success.

***H5:*** *Importance of branded clothing tends to decrease during the adolescence period.*

### **2.5.2. Fashionable Clothing**

As Solomon & Rabolt (2004: 4) clarify “fashion reflects our society and our culture; as a symbolic innovation, it reflects how people define themselves. Fashion can be thought of as a code, or language, that helps us to decipher these meanings.” The same authors claim that fashion is a concept that changes with time.

When deciding what fashion clothes should be acquired, commonly people prefer to share ideas with peers in advance, because fashion can be seen as high risk. Thus, it is a concept vastly influenced by others (Solomon & Rabolt, 2004). This is even stronger when referring to adolescents, since they are extremely sensitive to fashion (Grant & Stephen, 2005). Few studies clarify the evolution of the fashionable clothes importance during the period of adolescence. Meanwhile, with the increasing of age and maturity,

teenagers become more aware of their identity and consequently of fashion, taking more care of the actual trends.

*H6: Importance of fashionable clothing tends to increase during the adolescence period.*

### **3. Methodology**

In order to test our hypotheses, a quantitative research was designed according with the subjects previously discussed. All ethical norms from UNICEF (2002) were taken into account, and are explained in section 3.3.

#### **3.1. Sample**

The definition of adolescence is different according to the author we refer to. To Piaget (1962), adolescence period is the Propositional Operations Stage and comprehends children between 11/12 years old to 15 years old. John (1999) considers that adolescents are in a Reflective Stage, with specific cognitive and consumer behaviour characteristics and corresponds to children from 11 to 16 years old. Other authors (Romano et al., 2007; Rigby, 2000) used the interval 12 to 16 years old when applying their studies to the adolescence period. For this reason, this last interval was considered.

However, the extremes of this interval have opposite levels of self-esteem and materialism (Chaplin & John, 2007; Rosenberg, 1979). When children reach their 12 years old, the lowest level of self-esteem and the highest level of materialism are identified. The contrary happens in the 16 years old. Consequently, the most appropriated to do was to study the extremes of the interval previously defined, corresponding to 7<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades.

Since we are analysing differences in age and gender, the sample had to guarantee a minimum of 30 boys and 30 girls for each of the 2 grades, as presented in detail in Table 1.

**Table 1 - Minimum Composition of the Ideal Sample**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>7<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	<b>11<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>
<b>Female</b>	30	30
<b>Male</b>	30	30

In order to guarantee that we would obtain this final sample, 200 authorizations were delivered to adolescents' parents, of one public school.

### **3.2. Research Design**

In this research the questionnaire method was chosen with the following measures for each variable:

#### **3.2.1. Peer Influence**

To analyse the susceptibility of adolescents to be influenced by peers we used the Bearden, Netemeyer and Teel (1989) scale, comprised of 12 items, which evaluates both normative (8 items) and informational (4 items) influences on a five-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”.

#### **3.2.2. Self-Esteem**

This variable was assessed through a four-point Likert scale based on a study performed by Rosenberg (1965), which developed a set of 10 items to evaluate feelings about personal esteem. Five of the items are presented as *reverse score* items.

#### **3.2.3. Materialism**

To assess the level of materialism of adolescents, we used the 18 items scale of Richins & Dawson (1992), which evaluates materialism in terms of success, centrality and

happiness on a five-point Likert Scale, with seven of them being presented in the negative form.

#### **3.2.4. Branded Clothing**

To measure the importance of branded clothing we used the involvement and loyalty with brands scale from Quester & Lim (2003), which has 16 items on a five-point Likert scale.

#### **3.2.5. Fashionable Clothing**

To evaluate the significance of fashionable clothing for participants, we used O'Cass (2004) scale that assesses the fashion clothing involvement and product knowledge, and consumer confidence in fashion decisions. It is comprised of 17 items on a five-point Likert scale.

Our questionnaire integrated techniques to minimize method bias, such as inform the respondents that their participation was anonymous and that there were no right or wrong answers, because what was important was the individual opinion; so that their answers were truthful (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

A pre-test was done with ten children, between 11 and 17 years old, in order to verify if they understood all the situations described in the questionnaire. All the suggestions made by the adolescents in the pre-test were related to the type of language that should be used, and they were incorporated in the final questionnaire. Teenagers in the pre-test took on average 8 to 30 minutes to fill the questionnaire.

Subsequently, the questionnaire was analysed and validated by a psychologist<sup>1</sup>, who contributed with relevant advices to assess adolescents' opinions. This information was mainly related with the target language that should be used in the questionnaire.

In the end of the market research all the data was introduced in PASW Statistics version 18.0. Each variable was evaluated by the sum of its scale (as recommended in the original articles), in order to evaluate each situation the most close to the sample information. This means that the higher the obtained value in each variable, the higher the presence of it for the respondent. The variables' intervals are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2 – Variables' Intervals**

	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>
Peer Influence	12	60
Self-Esteem	10	40
Materialism	18	90
Branded Clothing	16	80
Fashionable Clothing	17	85

In the case of the Self-Esteem Scale, it was necessary to reverse the results to compare with the other variables, since the scale was measured in the opposite direction.

The hypotheses were mainly related with cases of association and correlation. In a situation of correlation analysis between variables, it is study the Spearman Correlation Coefficient because the data obtained it is classified as nonparametric. In the case of association, since we are studying a small sample, the Likelihood Ratio is the most appropriated to evaluate this situation.

We also asked some information about the adolescents' parents. One of the questions was in the parents' authorization document, where they indicated their correspondent level of education. The other question, regarding the parents' occupation was done in the adolescents' questionnaire. Since the relationship between teenagers and their

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<sup>1</sup> **Susana Ferro**, Specialized on Clinic Psychology. Currently she works in the *Instituto Quintino Aires* and in the *Associação Live Vegotsky de Formação*

parents can influence their answers/personality, it was important to analyse afterwards if there was any association between children's responses and parents' information.

### **3.3. Ethical and Legal Responsibility**

Regarding legal requirements, all the permissions were attained: firstly, from the Portuguese Ministry of Education; secondly from the school where the research was conducted; and thirdly, from children's parents. Before the request of these consents, it was clarified all the objectives of the study, explaining that it would be beneficial for the society.

In order to proceed with the questionnaire, some ethical issues needed to be assured. They are based mainly in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF, 1989), UNICEF's guidelines for research with children's participation (UNICEF, 2002), as well as standard recommended procedures (Greig, Taylor and MacKay, 2007).

Before the beginning of the study, it was vital to take into account that all the children's best interests were protected. Children's parents were informed of the study and its implications before their consent request (Appendix A). Then, it was explained to adolescents that they had the right to participate or to refuse to participate in the study. Additionally, it was guaranteed their confidentiality, explained their role in the research and where the final data would be used and published, as well as that all the participants would have the right to consult the study's results.

During the execution of the final questionnaire (Appendix B), all the children where directly involved in the research, not being exposed to risks, respecting them and their views.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Sample Composition and Reliability Analysis

Out of the 200 consents that were sent to parents, 148 permissions and individual participations were obtained (response rate of 74%). The final sample composition is described in Table 3. All descriptive statistics associated with the sample and with the variables in the research are presented in Appendix C.

**Table 3 – Sample Composition**

		GENDER		Total
		Male	Female	
CLASS	7th Grade	30	37	67
	11th Grade	32	49	81
Total		62	86	148

**Table 4 – Cronbach's Alpha of Scales**

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
Self-Esteem	0,891
Materialism	0,882
Influence	0,927
Brand Importance	0,954
Fashion Importance	0,972

consistency in this sample.

Regarding the reliability of the scales used in the questionnaire, Table 4 presents the computed Cronbach's Alpha, which shows that all scales demonstrate high levels of

### 4.2. Hypotheses Testing

Therefore, it is presented the results for each hypothesis. A summary of the tests of correlation and association is presented in Appendix D, Table 10.

Hypothesis 1: In the first hypothesis, the objective was to evaluate the level of susceptibility to be influenced by peers. It was argued that *adolescents tend to choose clothing mainly according with what their peers will accept instead of their preferences.*

The sample demonstrated low levels of influence, with a sample mean of 26,189 (on a scale from minimum of 12 and maximum of influence of 58). According to these values we **reject H1**, because respondents had a low susceptibility to be influenced by peers in their clothing choices.



This result can be explained by the fact that adolescents may not perceive this influence, they may not be aware of it. In the literature, it was found that adolescents prefer to share ideas with their peers before going shopping, in order to preserve group identity (Mascarenhas & Higby, 1993; Bearden & Randall, 1990). It is important to refer that during the market research, some teachers and people working in the school defended the same perspective of the literature. But, the results do not show it.

Hypothesis 2a: This hypothesis evaluated the relationship between the level of materialism and the importance of brands. It was defended in the hypothesis that *adolescents with high materialism prefer branded clothing*. By analysing the Spearman Correlation Coefficient we found it to be significant ( $p < 0,000$ ) and positive but moderate ( $r_s = 0,428$ ). This means that the higher the level of materialism, the stronger the importance of branded clothing for the adolescent. Consequently, **H2a is not rejected**.

This result supports that people with high levels of materialism, use certain products to feel a certain prestige (Belk, 1988). In the research it was found that branded clothing can offer it, because brands are used to attain a social and economic status (Piacentini & Mailer, 2004).

Hypothesis 2b: Similarly to the previous hypothesis, materialism was evaluated. However, in this situation, it was analysed its correlation with fashionable clothing. This hypothesis argued that *adolescents with low materialism prefer fashionable clothing*. Again the Spearman correlation coefficient was significant ( $p < 0,000$ ), but the value of the correlation was positive and low ( $r_s = 0,371$ ), thus contrary to our expectations. The obtained result means that the higher the level of materialism, the higher the preference for fashionable clothing. Therefore, **H2b is rejected**.

The reason for this result could be a different understanding from adolescents of the role played by branded and fashionable clothing. Adolescents are looking to fashion and brands as complements instead of opposite options.

Hypothesis 2c: In this case, it was argued an association between gender and fashionable clothing. The hypothesis tested if *female teens prefer fashionable clothing than branded clothing*. We tested the association between gender and fashion and the Likelihood Ratio ( $\chi^2=62,177$ ) was lower than the critical value ( $\chi^2_{\text{critical}}=67,505$ ). This means that there is no association, and that female adolescents do not differ from their male counterparts in terms of fashionable clothing. Thus, **H2c is rejected**.

In general, female teens pay much of their attention to physical appearance and fashion (Unger, 2001; Ricciardelli & McCabe, 2003). Through the analysis of the result, they are choosing their apparel independently of the associated fashion tendency, but according with their intention of visual appearance, using apparel to attain a certain body shape (Solomon & Rabolt, 2004).

Hypothesis 2d: This hypothesis completed the analysis about gender preferences. In this situation, it was tested if *male teens prefer branded clothing than fashionable clothing*, because male teens demonstrate higher levels of materialism (Churchill and Moschis, 1979) and tend to be more influenced by brands (Harper et al., 2003). In this case, there was an assessment of association between “Gender” and “Brands” variables. The Likelihood Ratio revealed a higher value than the critical one ( $\chi^2=71,734$ ;  $\chi^2_{\text{critical}}=66,339$ ). This result implied that there was an association between gender and brands. However, it did not prove that male teens are the ones that demonstrate the preference for clothes related to brands. To complement this analysis, it was study the correlation between these two variables. The result proved that does not exist a

significant correlation, through the analysis of the p-value of Spearman Coefficient ( $p \leq 0,238$ ). Therefore, **H2d is rejected**.

The result could be explained by three reasons: first, the literature cannot be applicable to the Portuguese reality because it was based on other countries; second, male teens are not aware of their preference for certain brands, since during the market research it was visually verified brands in their clothing; and thirdly, they can be encouraged by their parents to use branded clothing, since parents are socialization agents and a source of influence, who occasionally creates negative desires for material goods, like branded clothing (Chaplin & John, 2010).

Hypothesis 3a: It was hypothesized that *adolescents with high self-esteem prefer fashionable clothing*. To verify this hypothesis, we performed a correlation test between “Self-Esteem” and “Fashion” variables. The Spearman coefficient correlation did not demonstrate a significant value ( $p \leq 0,962$ ). This means that adolescents with high self-esteem do not prefer clothing mandatorily. Then, **H3a is rejected**.

Previously to the market research, it was expected to observe that adolescents with high levels of self-esteem expressed a higher preference for fashionable clothing, because both factors have a common high level of risk (Baumeister et al., 1989; Solomon & Rabolt, 2004).

This scenario was also not observed during the market research. The sample demonstrated, on average, high levels of self-esteem (Tables 7 and 8, Appendix C) and low consideration for fashion apparel. This can be seen as an adolescents' indifference for fashion when they are feeling well with themselves.

Hypothesis 3b: In order to complete the previous hypothesis, it was proposed that *adolescents with low self-esteem prefer branded clothing*. Similarly, the Spearman

coefficient correlation between “Self-esteem” and “Brands” was analyzed in terms of significance and it was non significant ( $p \leq 0,587$ ), which implied that adolescents did not prefer branded clothing when they presented low levels of self-esteem. So, **H3b is rejected**. Adolescents do not change their apparel choices (between branded and fashionable clothing) according with their levels of self-esteem.

Hypothesis 4a: In order to test the relevance of peers influence in teenagers' preferences of clothing, it was suggested, supported by literature, that *adolescents with high peer influence prefer branded clothing*. The Spearman correlation coefficient of the test that evaluated the relationship between “Influence” and “Brands” was significant ( $p < 0,000$ ). The test presented a positive and moderate correlation between these two variables ( $r_s = 0,466$ ), which showed that the higher the level of susceptibility of peers influence, the higher the preference for branded clothing. Consequently, **H4a is not rejected**.

The result reinforces the literature, which defends that teenagers are using brands as symbols to reinforce connections with their peers (Cardoso et al., 2008; Chaplin & John, 2005a). The presence of brands is seen as an element of a group identity and ideals (Cardoso et al., 2008; Chaplin & John, 2005a).

Hypothesis 4b: In this hypothesis, it was defended that *adolescents with low peer influence prefer fashionable clothing*. The correlation test between “Influence” and “Fashion” variables was evaluated through the Spearman coefficient. The result of the test demonstrated that it was significant ( $p < 0,000$ ) and with a positive and moderate correlation ( $r_s = 0,450$ ), which means that the higher the influence of peers, the higher the preference for fashionable clothing. The expected result for this hypothesis was a negative correlation between the two tested variables. However, the opposite was proved in the analysis. For this reason, **H4b is rejected**. It is possible to conclude that

peers are not only defining brands that adolescents should use but also the style that is approved in their social life because teenagers are highly dependent from peers (Feldman, 2008; Park & Lessig, 1977), and they behave accordingly with their peers' preferences (Kaiser, 1997).

Hypothesis 5: In this case, it was proposed that the *importance of branded clothing tends to decrease during the adolescence period*. The Spearman correlation coefficient was not significant ( $p \leq 0,081$ ). Thus, **H5 is rejected**.

This means that brands maintain the same importance during the adolescence period. A possible reason for this behaviour is that adolescents are not prepared to risk their shopping in other brands that cannot ensure their social success.

Hypothesis 6: It was considered important to evaluate the importance of fashion during the adolescence period. This hypothesis defended that the *importance of fashionable clothing tends to increase during the adolescence period*. The Spearman Coefficient Ratio between "Grade" and "Fashion" variables was not significant ( $p \leq 0,105$ ). Therefore, it cannot be proved that during the adolescence, the importance of the usage of fashionable clothing increases, so, **H6 is rejected**.

Even the literature argues that when adolescents are getting older, they become more aware of their identity and consequently of fashion and trends, the results conclude that, in parallel with branded choices, adolescents are not changing their behavior in terms of fashion during this specific period.

Parents' education and occupation were also taken into account. The collected information was analyzed through association and correlation tests with the other variables, each pair of them evaluated individually. There was not found any

relationship between parents' information and the data from the adolescents (Appendix D, Table 11). Hence, it was not possible to indicate that parents are influencing adolescents' clothing choices through their level of education or professional occupation.

## **5. Discussion and Conclusions**

The research provided two main insights. The first conclusion is the existence of an influence of peers and materialism in teenagers' clothing choices. These two variables are the most important elements that demonstrate a larger impact in the importance of branded and fashionable clothing.

Regarding materialism, it was concluded that the higher the materialism level, the higher the importance of brands and fashion. Fashionable clothing also satisfies the individual materialism, as brands. In order to prevent higher levels of materialism it is recommended to limit media and advertising exposure, not only in schools but in teenagers' homes. Parents can participate in this prevention, controlling the time of their children exposure to teenager programs that can influence them to desire material goods, like branded and fashionable clothing. This prevention to the media exposure will prevent the desire for material goods, and subsequently, a low level of self-esteem, which could be harmful for a good scholar performance and for a healthy social life. Despite that, this discovery can be used by marketers, since they may encourage materialistic behaviours in adolescents to sell their products. However, they must never forget ethical principles. We do not consider the possibility to influence teenagers to have stronger material desires as an ethical act because it will damage their self-esteem. Marketers should pay attention to this dilemma. They should find other alternatives to succeed without their target audience feel bad about themselves.

When adolescents were asked if their peers were influencing them in their clothing choices, they responded that it had a low influence. However, it was studied the impact of peers in their branded and fashionable clothing, and the conclusion was that their advices are taken into account in apparel choices. This means that the higher the influence of peers, the higher the importance of brands and fashion, which is according to the previous literature. To control this influence in schools, it is suggested the implementation of uniforms to avoid the use of brands and fashionable clothing, promoting equality between adolescents and independence from apparel. Besides, it will contribute to lower levels of materialism and improve self-esteem between adolescents. The second main conclusion is that adolescents see fashion and brands as complements. These two concepts have similar relevance and evolutions during the adolescence because they become more relevant for teenagers when materialism and peers' influence increase. Through this observation, it is possible to suggest that clothing brands will have greater success if they take fashion into consideration; and, to complement, fashionable clothing should be associated to a recognized brand.

### **6. Limitations and Future Research**

Although this study contributed with some important findings about clothing choices of adolescents, it is important to consider some limitations of this experience.

It will be important to take into account professors and parents opinions in further research, because some of them expressed, during the research, that adolescents are giving too much importance to apparel, in opposite to what was verified in our results. Furthermore, the majority of influence about clothing can be from parents, therefore, their opinion should be considered because they are an important socialization agent and a source of influence (Chaplin & John, 2010). However, this influence is not related

with parents' education and occupation, as it was verified in the results (Appendix D, Table 11). This influence can be associated with sociological practices in the Portuguese reality, and should be taken into account in future research.

Besides, in a further study should be evaluated the influence of television exposure on branded and fashionable clothing. As it was referred in the literature, television is considered a socialization agent that has impact on teenagers materialism, and consequently, in their clothing choices (Churchill & Moschis, 1979). It would be interesting to study mostly the influence of television characters of adolescents' programs.

Moreover, it is recommended to proceed with this study in other countries in order to verify differences of adolescents' clothing choices in different cultures.



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## 8. Appendixes

### Appendix A: Parents' Consent

Mónica Sofia Ramos Marques, Aluna de Mestrado em Gestão  
Faculdade de Economia - Universidade Nova de Lisboa  
Contactos: 911034889 – monicamarques8@gmail.com



**Assunto:** Pedido de autorização para educando participar em estudo relativo às “Escolha entre Estilos e Marcas de Roupas pelos Adolescentes”

Exmo. Sr. Encarregado de Educação,

Sou aluna do Mestrado em Gestão da FEUNL e estou a realizar a minha tese na área de comportamento do consumidor infantil, mais especificamente sobre a “Escolha entre Estilos e Marcas de Roupas pelos Adolescentes”. Este estudo irá permitir encontrar formas de minimizar a exclusão social entre os jovens e de aumentar a auto-estima dos mesmos.

Para tal, necessitava que o(a) seu educando(a) preenchesse um questionário, que terá uma duração máxima de 30 minutos. Este será realizado na escola e coordenado com as aulas.

Os dados recolhidos serão analisados por mim e a sua confidencialidade é total, sendo apenas publicados na tese os resultados do estudo sem a referência aos dados dos alunos e sem a identificação da escola onde o estudo foi realizado (apenas será mencionada a localidade e o tipo de escola, pública ou privada).

Agradeço ainda que me indicasse o nível de escolaridade de ambos os pais do seu educando.

	Sem estudos ou primária incompleta	Ensino Primário (4º ano)	2º a 3º Ciclos do Ensino Básico (6º -9º ano)	Ensino Secundário (10º-12º ano)	Licenciatura ou Bacharelato	Estudos Pós-Graduados
Pai						
Mãe						

Os resultados do estudo serão enviados para a escola, podendo ser consultados por todos os encarregados de educação. Desde já agradeço a sua cooperação.

Com os melhores cumprimentos,

*Mónica Marques*

Autorizo o(a) aluno(a) \_\_\_\_\_ do \_\_\_\_\_  
º ano, turma \_\_\_\_\_ a participar neste estudo.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ de \_\_\_\_\_ de 2011

Assinatura do encarregado de educação

## Appendix B: Questionnaire

Mónica Sofia Ramos Marques, Aluna de Mestrado em Gestão  
Faculdade de Economia - Universidade Nova de Lisboa  
Campus de Campolide, 1099-032 Lisboa



Olá! Estou a fazer um estudo para a minha tese de Mestrado. Para isso, venho pedir a tua ajuda, fazendo-te algumas perguntas sobre as tuas escolhas de Roupas.

Para que possas participar, necessitas de ter a autorização prévia do teu encarregado de educação. Contudo, o preenchimento deste questionário é opcional, ou seja, só participas se quiseres.

É importante que saibas que as informações recolhidas neste questionário são confidenciais e que por isso, os teus dados pessoais, bem como as tuas respostas, não vão ser partilhados com ninguém. Apenas os resultados finais globais poderão ser publicados na minha tese ou em artigos científicos, livros, notícias, etc., mas sempre respeitando o nosso acordo de confidencialidade.

A tua participação neste questionário é muito importante para mim, visto que estás a ajudar-me na minha tese de Mestrado e a contribuir para a investigação em marketing de adolescentes.

Obrigada,  
Mónica Marques

### 1. Informação Pessoal

Tenho \_\_\_\_ anos

Sou ☐ Rapaz

☐ Rapariga

### 2. Perfil Psicológico

Apresento-te de seguida uma série de afirmações, que se referem ao modo como te sentes geralmente em relação a ti próprio. Lê-as atentamente e indica o teu grau de acordo com elas. Para isso, coloca uma (X) no quadrado que avalia aquilo que tu pensas acerca de ti próprio(a), numa escala de Concordo Bastante a Discordo Bastante. O objectivo é que sejas sincero(a) na avaliação que fizeres de ti próprio e que assinales consoante a tua opinião pessoal sobre cada uma das situações descritas por cada frase. Não há respostas correctas nem erradas, cada pessoa é única e por isso diferente.

#### Parte A

	1. Concordo Bastante	2. Concordo	3. Discordo	4. Discordo Bastante
1. Globalmente, estou satisfeito(a) comigo mesmo(a)				
2. Por vezes penso que não valho nada (que não sirvo para nada)				
3. Sinto que tenho algumas boas qualidades.				
4. Sou capaz de fazer as coisas tão bem como a maioria das outras pessoas.				
5. Sinto que não tenho muitos motivos de que me orgulhar.				
6. Por vezes sinto-me de facto um(a) inútil.				
7. Sinto que sou uma pessoa, pelo menos, com tanto valor como a maioria das outras pessoas.				
8. Gostaria de ter mais respeito por mim próprio(a)				
9. Em termos gerais, inclino-me a pensar que sou um(a) falhado(a).				
10. Adopto uma atitude positiva para comigo mesmo(a)				



## Parte B

	1. Discordo Bastante	2. Discordo em Parte	3. Nem Concordo nem Discordo	4. Concordo em Parte	5. Concordo Bastante
1. Eu admiro as pessoas que têm casas, carros e roupas caras.					
2. Alguns dos mais importantes sucessos na vida incluem a aquisição de bens materiais.					
3. Eu não dou muita importância à quantidade de objectos materiais que as pessoas têm como um sinal de sucesso.					
4. As coisas que eu tenho significam o quão bem eu estou na vida.					
5. Eu gosto de ter coisas que impressionem as pessoas.					
6. Eu não dou muita atenção aos objectos materiais que as outras pessoas têm.					
7. Normalmente compro apenas as coisas que eu preciso.					
8. Eu tento manter a minha vida simples, no que a bens materiais diz respeito.					
9. As coisas que eu tenho não são assim tão importantes para mim.					
10. Eu gosto de gastar dinheiro em coisas que não são práticas.					
11. Comprar coisas dá-me muito prazer.					
12. Eu gosto de muito luxo na minha vida.					
13. Eu dou menos importância às coisas materiais do que a maioria das pessoas que eu conheço.					
14. Eu tenho todas as coisas que realmente preciso para desfrutar a vida.					
15. A minha vida seria melhor se eu tivesse certas coisas que eu não tenho.					
16. Eu não ficaria mais feliz se eu tivesse coisas melhores.					
17. Eu seria feliz se pudesse comprar mais coisas.					
18. Às vezes incomoda-me um pouco não poder dar-me ao luxo de comprar todas as coisas que eu gostaria.					

### 3. Fontes de Informação sobre Roupas e Calçado

São agora apresentadas algumas frases relativas às fontes de informação, ou seja, como é que tu escolhes a tua roupa e calçado e, sobre cada uma das frases, pedia-te que indicasses se concordas ou não, pintando o círculo na opção correcta, de 1 (Discordo Bastante) a 5 (Concordo Bastante).

	1. Discordo Bastante	2. Discordo em Parte	3. Nem Concordo nem Discordo	4. Concordo em Parte	5. Concordo Bastante
1. Consulto normalmente outras pessoas para me ajudarem a escolher a melhor de roupa.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Quando admiro uma pessoa, eu normalmente tento comprar as mesmas marcas que essa pessoa compra.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. É importante que os outros gostem das roupas e das marcas que eu compro.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Para ter a certeza que roupa ou marca devo comprar, frequentemente observo o que os outros compram ou usam.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Raramente compro a última tendência de moda de roupa até eu ter a certeza que os meus amigos a gostam.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Frequentemente identifico-me com outras pessoas comprando as mesmas roupas e marcas que elas compram.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Se eu tiver pouca experiência com algum artigo de roupa, muitas vezes eu faço perguntas aos meus amigos sobre esse artigo.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Quando compro roupa, normalmente compro as marcas que eu penso que os outros vão aprovar.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Eu gosto de saber quais as marcas e roupas que fazem uma boa impressão nos outros.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Frequentemente obtenho informação através dos amigos sobre roupa antes de a comprar	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Se outras pessoas me vão ver a usar um artigo de roupa, muitas vezes eu compro a marca que elas esperam que eu compre.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. Sinto que pertenço ao meu grupo por comprar as mesmas roupas e marcas que os eles compram.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



## 4. Importância das Marcas de Roupas

Gostava de saber a tua opinião relativamente a alguns aspectos relacionados com a importância que as Marcas de Roupas têm para ti. Nas questões em que é pedido para pensares numa marca em particular de roupa, pensa na tua **marca de roupa favorita**. Não existem respostas certas ou erradas e o importante para mim é saber a tua opinião. Peço-te então que assinalasses na tabela em baixo se concordas ou não com as frases que te são apresentadas, colocando uma cruz (X) na opção correcta, de 1 (Discordo Bastante) a 5 (Concordo Bastante).

	1. Discordo Bastante	2. Discordo em Parte	3. Nem Concordo nem Discordo	4. Concordo em Parte	5. Concordo Bastante
1. Foi muito importante para mim comprar esta marca particular de roupa em vez de outra(s) marca(s).					
2. Ao longo dos últimos meses/anos, eu comprei sempre a mesma marca de roupa porque realmente gosto.					
3. Eu dedico um grande esforço quando tomo uma decisão acerca de qual a marca de roupa que devo comprar.					
4. Apesar de outra marca estar em saldo, ainda assim comprei esta marca particular de roupa.					
5. Eu ficaria aborrecido(a) se eu tivesse de comprar outra marca de roupa se esta marca particular de roupa não estivesse disponível.					
6. Eu pensei sempre nesta marca particular de roupa em vez de outra(s) marca(s) quando eu considere comprar uma peça de roupa.					
7. Eu fico sempre animado(a) sobre poder obter esta marca particular de roupa em vez de outra(s) marca(s).					
8. Eu gostaria de continuar a comprar a mesma marca de roupa porque eu gosto muito da marca.					
9. Eu vejo-me muitas vezes a comprar esta marca particular de roupa em vez de outra(s) marca(s).					
10. Eu considere a marca como muito importante ao escolher uma peça de roupa.					
11. Eu senti-me melhor sobre esta marca particular de roupa comparando com outra(s) marca(s).					
12. Eu tomei muita atenção a esta marca particular de roupa comparando com outra(s) marca(s).					
13. Eu senti-me muito ligado a esta marca particular de roupa comparado com outra(s) marca(s).					
14. A partir do momento em que me decido por uma marca de roupa em particular em vez de outras, eu mantenho-me fiel à marca.					
15. Eu estive interessado(a) nesta marca particular de roupa comparado com outra(s) marca(s).					
16. Se esta marca particular de roupa não estiver disponível na loja, eu prefiro não comprar de todo se tiver que comprar outra marca.					

## 5. Importância das Roupas que estão na Moda

Estás quase a terminar! Seguidamente gostava de saber a tua opinião relativamente a alguns aspectos relacionados com a importância que a Roupas da Moda tem para ti, ou seja, se é importante na tua vida o usar a roupa da moda. Peço-te então que assinalasses na tabela em baixo se concordas ou não com as frases que te são apresentadas, colocando, tal como anteriormente, uma cruz (X) na opção correcta, de 1 (Discordo Bastante) a 5 (Concordo Bastante).

	1. Discordo Bastante	2. Discordo em Parte	3. Nem Concordo nem Discordo	4. Concordo em Parte	5. Concordo Bastante
1. Roupa da moda significa muito para mim.					
2. Roupa da moda é uma parte significativa na minha vida.					
3. Eu considero roupa da moda uma parte central da minha vida.					
4. Eu penso muito em roupa da moda.					
5. Para a minha personalidade, roupa da moda é um artigo importante.					
6. Eu estou interessado(a) em roupa de moda.					
7. Algumas pessoas estão muito interessadas por roupa da moda, ligadas e absorvidas por esta. Para outras, roupa de moda não é simplesmente tão importante. Estás envolvido(a) com roupa de moda?					
8. Roupa da moda é importante para mim.					
9. Eu estou muito envolvido(a) com roupa da moda.					
10. Eu vejo roupa da moda como um produto muito importante na minha vida.					
11. Eu estou muito familiarizado(a)/habituado(a) com roupa da moda.					
12. Eu sinto que sei muito sobre roupa de moda.					
13. Eu sou um(a) utilizador(a) experiente com roupa da moda.					
14. Eu classificar-me-ia como um(a) especialista em roupa da moda.					
15. Eu estou confiante que eu escolheria a marca certa da roupa de moda.					
16. Quando considero roupa da moda para comprar eu estou confiante que faria a escolha certa.					
17. Eu tenho a certeza da minha capacidade de fazer a melhor escolha em relação a roupa da moda.					

## 6. Profissão dos Pais/Encarregado de Educação

Pai:	
Mãe:	

Muito obrigada pela tua participação!

## Appendix C: Descriptive Statistics of the Sample

School Year	Frequency	Percent
7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	67	45,3
11 <sup>th</sup> Grade	81	54,7
<b>Total</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>100,0</b>

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	62	41,9
Female	86	58,1
<b>Total</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>100,0</b>

**Table 7 - Analysis of Variables by School Grades**

SCHOOL GRADE		Self-Esteem	Materialism	Influence	Brands	Fashion
7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Mean	28,8955	51,1045	28,8507	45,0597	45,6119
11 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Mean	30,7160	48,0247	23,9877	40,6790	40,9383
<b>Total</b>	Mean	29,8919	49,4189	26,1892	42,6622	43,0541

**Table 8 - Analysis of Variables by Gender**

GENDER		Self-Esteem	Materialism	Influence	Brands	Fashion
Male	Mean	30,5806	50,1290	26,9839	44,3710	41,3226
Female	Mean	29,3953	48,9070	25,6163	41,4302	44,3023
<b>Total</b>	Mean	29,8919	49,4189	26,1892	42,6622	43,0541

**Table 9 – Descriptive Statistics of Variables**

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Self-Esteem	148	21,00	17,00	38,00	29,8919
Materialism	148	46,00	30,00	76,00	49,4189
Influence	148	46,00	12,00	58,00	26,1892
Brands	148	63,00	16,00	79,00	42,6622
Fashion	148	68,00	17,00	85,00	43,0541



## Appendix D: Results

**Table 10 – Summary of Hypotheses' Results**

Hypothesis	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Nature of the Test	Results	Decision
H1	Influence	---	Analysis of the Mean	$\bar{X} = 26,189$ $\bar{X}_{scale} = 35$	✗
H2a	Materialism	Brands	Correlation	$rs = 0,428$ $p < 0,000$	✓
H2b	Materialism	Fashion	Correlation	$rs = 0,371$ $p < 0,000$	✗
H2c	Gender	Fashion	Association	$\chi^2 = 62,177$ $\chi^2_{critical} = 67,505$	✗
H2d	Gender	Brands	Association and Correlation	$\chi^2 = 71,734$ $\chi^2_{critical} = 66,339$ $rs = -0,097$ $p = 0,238$	✗
H3a	Self-Esteem	Fashion	Correlation	$rs = 0,004$ $p = 0,962$	✗
H3b	Self-Esteem	Brands	Correlation	$rs = -0,045$ $p = 0,587$	✗
H4a	Influence	Brands	Correlation	$rs = 0,466$ $p < 0,000$	✓
H4b	Influence	Fashion	Correlation	$rs = 0,450$ $p < 0,000$	✗
H5	Grade	Brands	Correlation	$rs = -0,144$ $p = 0,081$	✗
H6	Grade	Fashion	Correlation	$rs = -0,134$ $p = 0,105$	✗

**Table 11 – Parents Education and Occupation**

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Nature of the Test	Results		Decision
Father Education	Brands	Association and Correlation	$\chi^2 = 187,092$	$\chi^2_{critical} = 277,138$	✗
			$rs = 0,119$	$p = 0,157$	
Father Education	Fashion	Association and Correlation	$\chi^2 = 186,448$	$\chi^2_{critical} = 287,882$	✗
			$rs = 0,099$	$p = 0,242$	
Mother Education	Brands	Association and Correlation	$\chi^2 = 201,105$	$\chi^2_{critical} = 282,511$	✗
			$rs = 0,045$	$p = 0,592$	
Mother Education	Fashion	Association and Correlation	$\chi^2 = 211,918$	$\chi^2_{critical} = 287,882$	✗
			$rs = 0,081$	$p = 0,331$	
Father Occupation	Brands	Association	$\chi^2 = 260,410$	$\chi^2_{critical} = 422,214$	✗
Father Occupation	Fashion	Association	$\chi^2 = 276,115$	$\chi^2_{critical} = 447,632$	✗
Mother Occupation	Brands	Association	$\chi^2 = 312,997$	$\chi^2_{critical} = 490,960$	✗
Mother Occupation	Fashion	Association	$\chi^2 = 320,545$	$\chi^2_{critical} = 500,546$	✗

